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THE TOWER

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Compiled and Edited by—ELLEN FISH

Assisted by

Exchange Editor—KATHLEEN WILLIAMS

and

EDNA WEAVER WINIFRED LION

VIRGINIA MOORE

Illustration by—JEAN FARR

Under the Business Management of

BUNELLE HALL

JF.

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WASTE

God is an artist.
I know because I've seen Him.
A red sun melts and shades into blue
A drop of rain catches on a leaf,
Trembles,
Dissolves.

God must be a temperamental artist—
What does he mean by tonight?
The moon just hangs in a stretch of sky,
Wind chases wind among bare trees.
Look—that lone star all by itself.

—*Winifred Lion*, '38

I MEET THE SEA

I shall stride
Along the shore
In sea-mist
Clad—
Tern's feathers
In my hair,
Silver foam
Upon my feet,
A storm upon
My lips.

—*Cary Sanford*, '38

"WHAT'S IN A NAME?"

Jerry snapped herself into a bit of blue organdy as she peeped out the window for just one more look before it was too dark to see. She sighed. A real garden—not just carefully cultivated shrubbery and grass, but a delightful tangle of poppies, lilies, and larkspur. She wiggled her feet into her sandals. Oh, it was fun to go on Glee Club trips. The people were always so nice, and usually the girls stayed over-night in private homes instead of ruining the club's budget by going to some dinky hotel. Boy, she was lucky this time. Her hostess was the answer to every Glee Clubber's prayer. Miss Mary—Somebody. Jerry frowned. What was the woman's name? She pulled a slip of paper from her purse for the seventh time. Johnston, of course. Why couldn't she remember that? It was simple enough. The Civil War general—she could remember it by that. Johnston and the battle of Shiloh. Johnston—Johnston. Surely she could remember that for twenty-four hours—and long enough to write a "bread-and-butter" letter. That was important, too. She adored Miss Mary—who had a lot of white hair, a patrician nose, and ears pierced for earrings—evidently one of these people who had a coat of arms that simply rattled with blue-blooded ancestors. Jerry grinned. She should know better than to doubt her roommate's word, but Louise had not been able to make her understand that ancestors were a necessity in this place. Well, she knew it now. Small towns like Madison with colonial homes had to have something besides the newly erected liquor store to gossip about—why not pick on family trees? It was a very comforting way to settle the question of local aristocracy—especially for those who needed an excuse for being poor but proud!

She hummed a bit as she hung up her housecoat and put her things in order, then stopped as she watched her "partner" silently struggle with her hair. Sue was what she got for not knowing until the last minute that she could go on the trip. Poor Sue. She could take yellow, green, and purple ribbons for holding high C, but handling more than one fork was beyond her. And her grammar—! Jerry wasn't so good herself, but there were certain fundamentals that she insisted on.

She screwed up her courage.

"Didn't you enjoy supper?" she asked, thinking what a change it had been from the subdued roar of the college dining room.

"Oh, it was good all right," Sue admitted grudgingly as she churned through her suitcase for a handkerchief, "but, law, I'll never be able to sing after all that short cake! Seems like—"

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Jerry was in no mood for a parody on the "Cowboy's Lament."

"Are you ready?" she interrupted. "In twenty more minutes the curtain will be up an' the show will be on!"

"I guess you mean that we'll be givin' our secon' concert of the season," corrected Sue, who liked to state plain facts. "Well, I just hope we don't mess up 'O, Sing Us Sweet Songs' like we did las' night. Between you an' I, Jerry—"

Tap! Tap!

"Are you young ladies ready to go?"

"Yes'm. Come in, Miss Mary." Jerry slipped on her jacket and powdered her nose again.

"My! How sweet you look!" Miss Mary smiled, "And we'd better hurry because it's getting late. After the concert you are invited out to Bill's Log Cabin. That's a place just at the edge of town where the young people have a lot of parties. You'll have dates with—let me see," she consulted a paper—"David Blair and Charles Wills. They're nice young men and I know you'll like them—that is, if you care to go?"

Jerry shot a quick glance at Sue. She had no intention of doing what she had done the night before. She had crawled into bed at ten-thirty because Sue was too timid to have a date with some strange young man, while the rest of the Glee Club went to a party given by the local people.

"Oh, we'd love it, Miss Mary," she could see Sue's jaw dropping open, but she didn't let that stop her. After all, she'd live but once. "We'd love it," she repeated again, frowning darkly at Sue, who finally realized that it was her turn.

"Yes," she said weakly, "oh, yes. Yes, we would."

Miss Mary beamed as she led them down the stairs. "They'll call for you after the concert."

. . . . . .

"Where *is* my music folder?"

"Has *anybody* seen an extra C 120 floating around here? I've lost some music!"

"Does my nose shine?"

"Can you tell that this isn't *my* dress? I mean, does it look *too* big?"

"Does anybody have a pin? Straight or safety will do!"

"How long before we start?"

The dressing room was buzzing with confusion.

"My! I think I'll take a back seat," Jerry laughed, sitting down on an apple box with another girl. "Did you ever see such a gang!"

"Jerry!"

She turned.

"Well, what's the matter with you, Elsie? Isn't being at home enough to make you happy?"

Elsie laughed.

"It's just that I'm trying to get everybody dates for the party. They're giving us a reception after the concert an' then we're all going out to Bill's Log Cabin for a bit—"

"Yes, I know."

"Well, there's a boy who wants a date with you. He's nice and cute and I know you'll have a lot of fun."

"I'm sorry, but I have a date. Can't you get some one else?"

"No, he asked 'specially for you."

"My word!" Jerry was bewildered for a second. Who in Madison could be wanting a date with her? And then she remembered. On learning that Jerry was to be in her former home town, Louise had said something about writing to an old friend of hers, telling him to look Jerry up and show her a good time. She began to understand. Undoubtedly it was Louise's friend who wanted the date. What *was* his name? Jim? No, Tom. No, that wasn't it, either. Well, anyhow—

"I can't break my date, Elsie."

"Who's it with?"

"Sue 'n' I are supposed to go with Charles—Wills—or somethin'—an' somebody else. I can't remember names."

"Charles?" Elsie frowned. "Somethin's wrong. He's supposed to date Jewel—I'll find out what's wrong an' let you know later, Jerry—"

"All right, girls," Mr. Lanz, the director, called. "Let us proceed with the execution. Line up."

. . . . . .

The concert was over and every one was trying to powder her nose at the same dressing room mirror.

"How'd we do, Kid?"

"We weren't so bad!"

"They liked us too."

"Yeah, and 'Oh, Sing Us Sweet Songs' wasn't half bad either!"

"Um-huh. But we'd better hurry. They're ready for us at that reception. Let's go, Jerry."

"I'm going to help Mr. Lanz put away all this music, so y'all just go ahead."

Just as she was putting the last folder in the box, Elsie poked her head in the door.

"So here you are, Jerry! Gosh, I've been lookin' everywhere! I'm sorry, but things have gotten all mixed up somehow. Charles and David are sup-

posed to be with Jewell and Kate—I helped arrange it myself. I don't know how it happened—"

"That's all right," Jerry smiled. "I don't mind at all. But how can I get back to Miss Mary's? She thought Sue and I were to go to the Cabin, so she left."

"Well, if I were you, I'd go on an' date this other boy. Miss Mary won't mind I know—she likes Julian Price."

Julian. Julian Price. Who was he? Somewhere, sometime, Jerry remembered hearing Louise speak of him. Maybe he was the one Louise wrote to. Why couldn't she remember names? Well—

"What about Sue? Does she have some one to go with?"

"No, the men gave out! But you can take her with you out to the cabin and we'll all be together more or less, not just dates, you know. Is that O. K.?"

Jerry nodded.

"Phew!" Elsie mopped her forehead. "Boy, what a night this has been! Trying to get beaux for twenty-seven girls is no joke! C'm on, lady. I need me some punch."

Over the rim of her cup, Jerry smiled at Elsie. She had been introduced, between swallows, to dozens of people, but Julian Price had not yet made his appearance. And then she saw a short, stocky boy of about sixteen hurrying up, peering carefully through thick glasses.

"My word, who is this gentleman approaching? He walks like a man with a purpose."

She knew better than to say what she thought. In small towns every one seemed to be everyone else's cousin. And besides, she felt slightly sick. This was Julian Price, she knew. Ye gods, what luck! But she might have known—any one named Julian! Surely he wasn't the boy Louise had written to!

"Miss Jerry Young, Mr. Julian Price," and Elsie vanished.

How d'you do?"

"Pleased t'meetcha."

Pleased t'meetcha! My stars! What could she say to a person like that? She grabbed Sue as an anchor.

"Miss Sue Crozier, Mr. Julian Price. Sue is going out to the cabin with us, you know, er—"

"Yes,—er—yes—that is, Elsie told me. Er—do you mind if I call you by your first names? Thanks. It's so much trouble t' remember t' say 'Miss', you know—er—let's sit down." He suddenly seized upon the idea like a child upon a new game. "Here's a good place. Don't you think so? Er—how about—that is, would you like some punch?"

"Yes, please," Jerry pasted a smile on her face. "I think I need some."

He was back all too soon. Jerry drank as slowly as possible. No use to try to talk. Words stuck in her throat. And Julian seemed to manage to keep up some kind of a conversation. As the reception was in full swing, Jerry paid no attention to the sound of approaching footsteps until all three of them looked up to see a tall young man smiling down at them.

"Oh—er—" Julian jumped up. "Miss Young, Miss Crozier, Mr. Jack Martin."

Jack Martin! That was the one Louise had written to! Jerry's feet fell flat, but she smiled gallantly.

"How d' you do? Louise asked me to tell you 'hello' for her."

"She asked me to look you up," he said. "We're all going out to the cabin after the reception—"

Oh, ye gods, he's going to ask me for a date, Jerry thought, panic-stricken—

"—do you have a date?"

She gulped. It was a good thing her smile was pasted on, or it wouldn't last through all this.

"Yes, I'm sorry."

"So'm I. Well, tell Louise I said hello."

"I will. Good night."

"Night."

This was what she got for not being able to remember names. Well, it was exactly what she deserved. Some day she'd learn to use her brain. She only hoped he didn't think that because Louise wrote him that he had an official date with her. Good heavens! Just what had Louise written? Something about looking her up and showing her a good time or the town or something. Any one else would have learned more about this . . .

"What? Oh, yes. I'm ready to go to the cabin."

. . . . . .

With her hat perched on the top of her head, her bag in one hand and her shoes, purse, and gloves in the other, Jerry tiptoed quietly into the room, put down her luggage and hunted through her drawer for a candle. Lights had been out for an hour or so and she must hurry to bed. Going on trips was lots of fun, but she did need sleep occasionally.

Now if she could just find a match—Heck! Why did she put her bag down right where she'd stumble all over it?

"'Lo, Jerry. Have a good time?" Louise rubbed her eyes.

"Yeah, man. Go to sleep. Tell you about it in the morning."

"Don't be silly. How do you like Madison?"

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"I love it—"

"Did Jack look you up?"

"Um-m" Jerry tied the belt to her pajamas and began washing her face. "I'll tell you about it tomorrow, or rather, this morning. You'd better go back to sleep—"

"What'd he say? Did you date him?"

Jerry gave up.

"All right, here's the whole story—"

Louise rolled with laughter.

"And so you dated Julian! And you thought he was Jack! Of all people to get mixed up! Boy, this is funny! Sounds just like you, Jerry."

Jerry grinned as she pulled off her hose.

"Maybe I'll live it down. But henceforth deliver me from blind dates!" She yawned. "I'm dead. An' Mr. Lanz says that we're to report to all classes tomorrow—no Glee Clubbers in the infirmary for sleep! But the *next* day is a different story! The point being you won't go the second day y' know."

"Aren't you going to ask me if there's any news," Louise asked as Jerry was about to blow out the candle.

"Well, what?"

"Got a letter today."

"Oh, you did."

"Um-m. From Madison. Mr. Jack Martin. Ever heard of him?"

"Once."

"Well, he said tell that roommate of mine that he hopes to show you a better time than poor Julian did—this summer. He was talking about this this summer." Louise was half asleep.

Jerry laughed as she blew out the candle and crawled into bed.

"Boy, 'poor Julian' and I spent one miserable hour at that cabin all right. . . . Louise, how does he know that I'm to visit you this summer?"

"I told him."

"When?"

"Oh, I dunno—Christmas, I guess—go to sleep."

"Well—night."

"Night."

Three minutes ticked slowly past.

"Louise?"

"Yeah, what in the heck do you want now?"

Slowly, "He said for me to tell you 'hello.' "

—*Bunelle Hall*, '38

HOUSEWORK

The Bride

Clock
  alarming
rousing me
from
sleep
  disarming.
Toast
  burning
adding to
my
store
  of learning.
Kiss
  consoling
drying tears
with
sweet
  cajoling.
China
  gleaming
peeping up
from
rich suds
  steaming.
Sunlight
  glancing
lighting up
my
dish pan's
  dancing.

The Farmwoman

Milk-cows
  calling
disrupt my sleep
with
ceaseless
  bawling.
Breakfast
  tasteless
angers husband
with appetite
  sateless.
Long since
  discontinued
his caresses
are
little
  remembered.
Windows
  sooty
once
were shining,
emulous
  of beauty
Monotonous
  servility
this my lot,
fraught
with
  futility.

—*Louise Phagan*, '39

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RELICS

I

Fur from the city
The smoke and grit
The rumblin' and shakin'
Jist as fur's she can git
There's where you'll find her
By day and by night
With her dirty ol' knittin'
And her smelly ol' pipe.

II

Feet on rail
Pipe unlighted
Head resting
On his sunken chest
The remains of a massive frame
Slumped in a rickety chair.
His is the life
Of an ancient fisherman
Whose days are spent
With puttering around
In his old, warped boat
As ancient
As he.
Living like a king
On a small pension
Catching a few fish
Now and then—
Just to keep
His hand in
He sez'—

But I wonder
If it's not
To keep his belly
Full!

—*Mallie Knight*, '41

BIRMINGHAM

BIRMINGHAM IS—

A bit of the North into the South; an overgrown hick town. Birmingham is a city of steel, a city of people—life.

THE RACE TRACK

It was Saturday in Birmingham, At six o'clock Second Avenue and Twentieth Street, commonly known as the "Race Track", was a crawling mass of humanity. Lights pushed their way through the darkness, giving a harsh, synthetic brilliance to the traffic-laden streets. The noise was almost deafening. Street cars roared and clanged; automobiles blared their challenges; newsboys added their shrill cries to the chaos of sound.

Totally unperturbed by the activity surrounding her a sere old woman sat on the corner peddling papers, with an equally shrunken, one-legged old man. Her hair straggled about the time-eaten collar of her coat, her face was as lifeless as that of a mummy, except for her cunning eyes and her incessant nibbling of snuff. She was an institution on the "Race Track", with her nasal voice grating "News, News", between spits.

The old man whined into her ear, "Say, Mary, gimme a quarter, will yuh? Yuh know I ain't got a thing for Josie's new young'n."

Mary sat immobile. A trickle of juice ran down her chin.

"Please, Mary—yuh know she'll 'spect somepin'."

Mary allowed herself an ironic grunt and spat. "Hell, yuh never gimme nuttin' and I work hard as you. Wal, I ain't askin' nuttin' fur me, nowhow."

THE DANCE

The streets of an exclusive residential section were slightly brightened by expectant porch lights. An expensive car dashed recklessly around a corner. The occupants of this car were a boy and girl, both members of the "smart" set.

"Man, that was a quick turn." The boy endeavored to make conversation.

"John, I simply refuse to be polite and talk to you if you won't take me to that dance."

"But, Sue, it is much too uncivilized with all those crude and low people."

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"Low. People are not low, they are real people, nothing else. If you'd take more interest, you'd like them."

And as a means of stopping Sue's barrage of words, John said, "Look at Vulcan's feet—that's an unusual way of lighting him."

"Yes, he is beautiful now. He reminds one of white hot steel in that light." And then Sue fell into another sulky silence as they rounded the curve on the crest of Red Mountain. The myriad of lights made an ever-changing lace work pattern etched against the black cloth of night.

John sighed, "All right, Sue. We go to the dance."

THE ACCIDENT

At midnight, traffic was in full swing. Cars sped along the streets of Birmingham, their lights casting weird shadows on the sidewalks. In one of these cars sat a rebellious girl.

"So the party's over and we have to go home. Why?"

"Well," the boy asked, "what would you suggest?"

"I don't know. Something exciting. Why can't we see some life?"

"If we had a short wave radio we could chase police cars."

"Yeah, but we haven't."

The girl sat for a moment in disgruntled silence. They were crossing the viaduct at Twenty-first street. The tires made a sizzling noise on the pavement.

Abruptly they came upon a crowd standing around a car.

"Oh," the girl cried. "An accident. What fun!"

The boy parked the car and the two got out, crossed the street and joined the crowd.

Two impressions struck the girl at once—the nauseating smell of blood and the deafening silence. She saw chunks of greyish matter lying in pools of blood clotting on the sidewalk. Near the car lay a body. The girl took a few steps closer to see what had happened and then drew back in horror. The body was that of a woman. The skull was torn open, showing the brain in congealing blood. The girl felt sick, and turned back to the car—She heard the hysterical sobbing of a woman and started to run—

The boy and girl drove for a few minutes in silence.

"You went to see life and you found death." He broke the silence.

"No," she said, "Life."

The boy shrugged his shoulders. "Let's go to Dr. Gus'."

—*Helen Elaine Garrett,* '38

POLISH WOMAN

Bulby nose, thick lips
Scraggly hair, sloppy hips.

She hates the country, and "Vunts to go back
To Joisey City or Hackensack."

Hates to squeeze milk from cow to pail
And walk a mile to get the mail

Says she, "It's Hell to live on a stone pile
Mit no other hoos in fifteen mile.

In de old country, me granmutter
Liked to make cheese and butter.

But nut me, I vunt to go back
To Joisey City or Hackensack."

—*Ellen Fish,* '38

INTERPRETATION

Les Fenton was drunk. He stood there, against the little bar at one end of the club lounge room, muttering incoherently to himself, the tiny liquor glass dwarfed in his big hand. He glared owlishly at the delighted group around him and set his glass down carefully on the polished wood of the bar. Then he hitched up his trousers, pulled down his white waistcoat and gave every evidence of lapsing into insociability for the rest of the evening.

This would never do. Saturday nights at the club were dull enough when the whole crowd was there, and tonight, when none but the most hardy souls had been willing to brave the wind and rain for the privilege of going home lit up like a Christmas tree at two A.M., it was deadly.

There were not enough women to dance, only two; Dot Townsend with her bright smile and lacquered hair, and Annie Brownall, who came only because her husband, Clyde, made her.

They had played bridge until the men snarled at each other and the women were icily polite. After that they kept buying Les drinks. Sober he was a bore, drunk, he at least always did the unexpected.

With one accord, the four men and two women turned to Jim Townsend, standing by the blazing fire. Silent appeal was in their eyes not to let this, their last hope of entertainment, pass out on its feet. They always looked to Jim. He was their leader.

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Jim gave a facetious little smile, went forward a half-step and shook Les, now nearly asleep.

"I say, old man," he cultivated an English accent. "Come alive and give us a bit of gossip."

Les opened one eye, then stood erect. Outside the wind sounded in an eerie whistle. He raised his voice thickly above it.

"If it's gossip you want, Jim Townsend, I'll tell you shomething." He wagged an admonishing finger at the group.

"I know shomebody that thinks they're getting away with shomething right under shomebody's nose, but they are *not,* cause I know and I know shomebody else that knows too."

The group smiled broadly, collectively. Good ole Les, always coming through with a topic for conversation. Now they could talk and conjecture until a decent hour.

They allowed him to go to sleep then, elbows propped on the bar, his chin dropped on his stiff shirt front.

Dot Townsend, her satin sheathed body curved to fit the luxurious arm chair, pursed her full lips and let a worried frown crease her white forehead. What had Les meant by that crytic sentence? He couldn't know. They'd been too careful. That last week-end with Tad had been managed so skillfully that even Jim hadn't suspected, much less old crabby Les Fenton. She smiled a little in self-appreciation. It had been a swell plan to have Lili send that telegram from New York. It was a wonder Jim hadn't wanted to go with her. He usually did! She made a *moue* of distrust. He was such a blind fool! So wrapped up in that old bank of his, taking such pride in being the youngest bank president in the state, that he didn't have time to appreciate a good wife. He and his man-about-town ways and English accent.

But Tad, now—her dark eyes brightened. Tad was so considerate. *He* knew how to appreciate a woman. If Jim ever knew about them—Oh, Heavens, suppose he did. What was it Les had said, "—'cause I know and I know somebody else that knows, too." If that skunk had told Jim—her fist closed in impotent fury. Was that the reason Jim had been so absent-minded and worried during the last week? Was that the reason he had been so irritated when she wanted to come to the club tonight? He never had liked Tad Hunt anyway. If he did know he might—no telling what he might do, and he *MUST* know! What luck Tad had come tonight. Hurriedly, she ground out her smouldering cigarett stub on the satin-wood end table by her chair and went to find him.

Jim Townsend unlocked the door to the Townsend apartment with shaking hands. The key made a queer rattling sound against the brass of the

lock that sent shivering spasms down his spine. Hell, what made him so nervous? Of course Les was just popping off.

He groped his way in and switched on the light. Where in the devil was Dot? He couldn't remember. Must have left her at the club. Well, she was able to take care of herself and if she couldn't, Tad Hunt could.

Lord, what a feeling! Looked like the hang-over could wait until morning. He walked unsteadily into the bath-room and held his fair head under the stream of cold water that poured from the facuet. Wiping the water off with the first towel that came to hand, (it happend to be Dot's best one) he stared at himself in the mirror above the marble basin. He gave a short, ugly laugh. Well, anyway he was beginning to look the part. Tie and collar loose, eyes bloodshot, hair tousled, face red—give him a two days' beard and he'd look like any common, ordinary thief.

In the bedroom he saw the *Evening Post,* lying on Dot's bed where she had left it, crumpled and torn but with the front page uppermost. Across it in big black letters ran the headlines.

"Cashier absconds with $50,000, Merchant's Bank." The letters jiggled crazily in front of Jim's eyes. That might well represent the headlines that would soon be printed about him, except it would be "President absconds with $150,000, First National Bank." Only he wouldn't have the $150,000 to abscond with. God knows, he hardly had a red cent left. That last market plunge had taken all he had, that is, all that part Dot hadn't spent. She was an expensive wife. He walked to her closet and swung open the door. As he looked at the racks of dresses, so pretty, so filmy, but so costly, his eyes filled with tears of self-pity. What a life he led, a spendthrift wife, a salary that wouldn't feed a poor man, a market that forced him to use bank funds to cover his margin.

If he could only have held out until next week maybe his luck would change. But it was no use now. Heavens only knows how Les Fenton had found out about it, but he wouldn't hesitate to tell the rest of the world, and he couldn't raise $150,000 in that many years.

He swayed over to the bedside table and poured himself a stiff drink from the decanter which always sat there. Opening the tiny drawer for a handkerchief to wipe his dripping chin, his hand touched the revolver that was kept there for fear of burglars. He pulled it out triumphantly.

"Hell, I'll show 'em." He muttered. "They can't push me up in a corner and get away with it. I'll show 'em." And he wandered vaguely back into the bathroom.

Annie Brownall lay shivering beside her snoring husband. How on earth did that stuffy old bachelor Les Fenton know? He must have seen her going to the Doctor. She lay still, hugging her secret within her. All

her life she had wanted a baby. Even as a child only baby dolls had appealed to her. A baby! In imagination she clutched the pink and white bundle that would be hers. *All* hers, too. Clyde had never wanted a baby. He hated children and he lost no opportunity to tell her so.

Stealthily she slipped out of the bed and into the bathroom. Could Les have told from her figure? She gathered her thin night-gown together in the back and looked at herself. No, no sign yet. She brushed her pale brown hair out of her eyes. Here she was 33. Married ten years. She took up a hand mirror. She could pass for an unpreserved forty.

She peered into the full-length mirror again, anxiously. How long could she keep Clyde from guessing? Mentally she went over her wardrobe. Most of her clothing would help her she decided. And when Clyde fount out. Why—He might want her to—Her face went pale at the thought. No, she wouldn't do that no matter what he said. She'd heard of women dying, or worse—And she wanted her baby.

Why did Clyde have to be like that? He used to love her—and she had loved—she still loved him. If only he wouldn't drink so much and stay out so late at night.

She gave another sigh and went back into the bedroom, but instead of going back to the bed, she went to the dresser and started softly to take out her clothes. She would have her baby!

Late Sunday afternoon Clyde Brownall came blundering into the barroom. He slapped the aching Les a hearty smack on the shoulder.

"Hi, ya, Les. I've got news for you. I'm going to have a baby!"

Then seeing the incredulous amazement on Les' beefy face, he laughed.

"No, I mean, we are, Annie is. Gosh, just think of it." His voice grew reverent. "In just about seven months I'm gonna be a father. Annie was so scared when she found out about it that she went home to her mother last night after we left here. But she's back now and just as happy as I am about it." He laughed again. "Aren't women funny? Imagine Annie not wanting a baby."

"No," he continued as Les tried to pour him a congratulatory drink. "I'm off that stuff. I got to stay home and take care of Annie and—you know," he floundered, "In her condition and all. I haven't told her about Dot yet."

Les looked befuddled.

"Didn't you know? Dot Townsend ran away with that Tad Hunt and Jim shot himself. They found him just a little while ago. Guess he couldn't stand the thought of losing her."

Later as he was again refusing drinks from the regular Sunday afternoon

crowd he said curiously, "Say, Les, what did you mean by what you said last night?"

"I don'no," Les groaned. "I say so much. What *did* I say?"

"Oh, you just said you knew somebody that was trying to put something over on somebody else, and that they weren't getting away with it."

"Oh, *that*." Les had a hazy memory. "Oh, well, I guess I was talking about Martenelli overcharging me for that last Sherry I bought."

—*Virginia Moore*, '39

MY PEOPLE

O
People!
You of the
Filthy slums
And starving cats nosing
In garbage cans . . .
You of the
Share-crop farms
And syphilitic morons
And the eternal weevil,
Lift up your heads
From the mire and slime
Of ignorance
And cleanse yourself in
The o'erflowing fount
Of knowledge.
Raise your muck-dripping
Flag to the clean winds.
Follow your fathers!
Your fathers,
Who bore their proud
Banner
Woven from the flames
Of
Divine Courage.
My People!
People!
March on!

—*Cary Sanford*, '38

WARNING

Mammoth furnace, incubator of hate,
Mother of ruthless steel cast into arms,
Cool your flaming tongue, filter your sooty breath
Lest men take fear and spread alarms.
Tangled thicket, underbrush of rapid growth,
Hide not the barbs of wire, rusted by rain;
Nor cover too deep with grass the mounds
Where these few years, the fallen have lain.

—*Edna Weaver*, '39

TO A DYING DOGWOOD

Cover your weary pale face, little harlot,
And pull your brown shawl closer yet,
You've lost all your brightness,
Your glimmering whiteness
But your sad, faded eyes are not wet.

Have you forgotten the day, little harlot
When you and the sun were at play?
You laughed in the lightness
No time for contriteness,
Now you're tired at the end of your day.
Rest well your weary pale face, little harlot,
And sleep 'neath your tattered brown shawl.
You'll dream of your brightness
Your glimmering whiteness
When you answered Spring's first call.

—*Jean Jenkins*, '39

WITHOUT MIRTH

Click. Slide. She pinned up another curl. Click, sounded the bobby pin, pushed against her teeth for more dexterous opening. Click. Slide. Another curl.

I can't stand it much longer, he thought, setting his jaws tight together so that he would not yell at her. Five years of your pinning up that damned hair. Five years, every night. If I had the nerve I'd cut the stuff off. . . . No, I wouldn't, either. I'm proud of your hair, the way it shines under candle light, the way the ringlets bounce up and down when you play tennis. . . . But if I have to sit here and listen to one more curl—Why th' hell can't you pin up that stuff out of my sight and hearing?

Click. Slide. Another curl. He picked up his newspaper and turned to the sports section. In the center of his favorite columnist's daily write-up was a neat, cut out blank about six inches long, which rendered the rest of the column meaningless. He could feel the blood pounding at his temples as his irritation increased. He turned the page over to verify his suspicion; the back proved to be the Woman's Page. Above the blank was the caption "Marian Modern's Daily Pattern. Cut It Out." His hands gripped the newspaper until the knuckles were white and ten crescents appeared in the sheet. If she does that once more. . . .

She was still pinning up her hair. Click. Sli—*I can't stand it I'm going mad. . . .*

He threw the paper down and got heavily to his feet. "I'm going out, dear," he announced.

"All right, sweet," she smiled up at him. She heard the door slam behind him. *Damn* you, she grated. You and your eternal door-slamming. If you've gone out of this house once in the past five years without slamming that door, I haven't known it. She listened, contemptously expectant. It came . . . the dull thud of the garage door as it slammed.

She finished pinning up her hair and removed the makeup from her face. Dully she stared at her reflection in the mirror. God, how ugly I am like this, she thought. Hair skinned back from my forehead, face slick and pale as an onion . . . no, not an onion. A potato. A boiled, peeled potato. No wonder he hates me.

Slipping off her robe, she stood up and admired her body in the mirror. My figure is still nice; I've kept my looks. He's proud of that; always trying to show me off in company. Still. . . .

She went to the bathroom and stepped under the shower. A quick lather, a swift rush of warm water, and she stepped out, eyes tightly shut.

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She groped for a towel. Her foot encountered a wet soggy mass on the floor. *Again,* dammit, she thought. That was the last clean towel in this house. *Must you leave them lying on the floor wet and nasty? If I could get my hands on you. . . .*

Click. Slide. In the dark he unfastened his belt and took off his trousers. Feigning sleep, she could hear them rustling to the floor. Click. He laid collar buttons and cuff links on the dresser. One rolled off. She heard his heavy breathing as he pawed at the floor in an effort to regain the link. His whispered curses were of no avail. She laughed softly to herself. Serves you right . . . why can't you wear shirts with buttons sewed on.

He sat down on the foot of the bed. Click-click. He unlaced a shoe. Slide. He removed it. Thump. It fell to the floor. Click-click. He unlaced the other. Slide. Removed it. Silence. *If you don't hurry and let it fall I'll scream. . . .* She bit her lip furiously to hold back the shriek that strove for lease in her throat. Thump. She went limp.

The sound of swishing water from the bathroom wakened him. "Da da tumpty tum, oh, no, you can't take that away from me," she sang, off-key. He gritted his teeth. Damn you, who wants to. I'm used to it—almost. Give me time. It's just been five years that you've hogged that bathroom, singing in the mosquito whine you call your voice. Only five years . . . *five years . . . FIVE YEARS. . . .* The veins in his neck stood up, knotted and lumped. His throat felt tight. He tried to force himself to be calm. It's all right. *All* right. *Perfectly* all right. Can she help it if her innate being demands that she stay in there an hour, leaving the floor ankle-deep in water when she *does* go? Can she help it if—YES BY GOD, SHE CAN.

She ate her breakfast alone. She could hear him blundering around as he dressed in the bedroom. Lord, do you have to kick over every chair in the house looking for the socks that are in the drawer where they always are? Do you *have* to pull out every damn' drawer in the dresser? . . .

"In the second drawer, dear," she called.

"Thanks, precious." Second drawer, hell. Nothing but your blasted undies in here. Oh—here. Well, why the devil did they have to be on the very bottom. Wish you'd keep your blamed stepins somewhere else. Have to dig an hour to get to my own things. I'll be damned if I put this stuff back like it was. He shoved the drawer to. It stuck. He kicked it and strode into the bathroom.

You perverted son of a pig, she thought, buttering a piece of toast. *Some day you'll kick that drawer and I'll go stark raving crazy and I hope to God I have sense enough to pick up a butcher knife before I do. . . .*

He stared at the disordered lavatory. His new straight razor lay open, out of its case, with a froth of lather on the edge. He walked slowly toward it, his eyes fixed on the razor as if glued there. He picked it up, tenderly wiped its blade clean. His brain seethed and simmered in a wave of fury. I told her . . . a dozen times I told her. . . .

He went toward the kitchen, proceeding like a sleep-walker. Click. Slide. He opened and shut the razor like a fan. He stood across the table from her. There came over him a queer feeling that he had done this before; maybe in a previous incarnation. As he glared at her, something within his brain seemed to snap, releasing his flood of rage. He sprang, quickly and surely.

Click. She screamed. Slide.

He smiled. Wiping the razor clean on the table cloth, he slid it back into its case. With a feeling of duty done, he went to the bathroom and began whistling as he shaved.

She sat quite still. She did not hear his tuneless whistling, which usually irritated her beyond words.

The smear on the whiteness of the tablecloth gleamed wetly red for a time, then gradually stiffened into dull brownness.

I've never seen her look prettier. Of course, they had to put a high-necked dress on her, but she looked so calm, you know. And that gorgeous hair . . . honestly, those beautiful curls! They say it was still pinned up when. . . .

Oh, I don't know. Nobody does. They seemed to be the perfect couple. He wouldn't even look, afterward. They say he just sits there in the cell, sort of smiling to himself. Not like it was funny, you know, but. . . .

Yes, you might say that. . . . Yes. Without mirth.

—*Louise Phagan,* '39

ROSARY

Like a thread
Upon which beads are strung,
Happy hours
Are linked
By pain.

—*Winifred Lion,* '38

EBB AND FLOW

I

Trunks bumping
Heels flying
Halls echoing
Voices crying
September.

II

Horns shrilling
Cars whining
Furs gleaming
Eyes shining
December.

III

Skirts swirling
Feet tapping
Brains whirling
No napping
April.

IV

Tears falling
Cheeks burning
Joys recalling
No returning
June.

—*Virginia James,* '38

MODERNITY

A pool of silvery moonlight
A row of dogwood, virginal, white—
"My dear, your words are trite.
Don't use rhyme, it's out of date,
Skip the meter, never mind the rate,
Spell as you feel, don't punctuate."
Moon lite
White dogwood.
"My dear, you've done a work of art,
It's full of beauty, it wins my heart."
But somehow—
It didn't impress the critics!

—*Mary Sterne,* '41

A DREAM

The steeds of night
Come thundering
Down the mountain
To
Stop with quivering
Flanks
Before my quiet path.
I run, I run
And leap upon
A stallion's back
To gallop madly away
With wind-smarting
Eyes,
And the curved
Cold moon
To bind my streaming
Hair.

—*Cary Sanford*, '38

MILK-TIME

"Mattie! Mat—tie!" Ma Beckett's call stopped the steady series of noises coming from the front porch swing. There was a momentary pause for the creaking chains as Mattie put out one foot down to slow the motion.

"Mattie, it's time to milk. Hurry now before ol' Betsy gets to her calf."

"Coming, Ma." Mattie gathered her quilting scraps in one hand and pushed open the screen door with the other. It slammed shut and Mattie heard Grandma's low irritable murmur. Not stopping to argue, she ran on back to the kitchen.

"No water in the waterbucket to wash off ol' Betsy's bag", she thought. "And Pa always brags about how his wife and daughter never have to draw any water. Oh well, this only makes about the sixth bucket I've drawn today. What is one more in my sweet life?"

As Mattie went out the side gate, Fritz came running around the corner of the house.

May, 1938

"Come on, Fritz—milk time—Reckon you'll miss me, ol' boy, when I leave tomorrow—tomorrow—back to the city—"

"Hey, Mat, turn ol' Betsy out tonight." This order was followed by a long spit of tobacco, and Pa Beckett settled back against the post on the store porch. Pa Beckett's store with its Garrett's snuff, printed gingham, salt meat, and chewing tobacco supplied the small community where the village traded fresh eggs, corn and potatoes for these luxuries. He opened the store at sunrise and closed at sunset, except on Saturday night when he stayed open until nine o'clock. He closed at meal time, too, but when a customer called he would interrupt his noon-day nap to let him have a nickel's worth of Brown Mule.

"Your move, Perry," he said to his checker partner.

As Mattie crossed the narrow country road she kicked up the damp white sand with the toe of her tennis shoes. The road divided in the center to go around on either side of a large oak which Pa Beckett wanted saved to shade his front yard. On Sundays when there were too many people to sit in the house, the whole crowd usually sat around under the shade in chairs brought from the porch.

"Pa sho has queer notions," she thought. "I can't for the life of me see why he wanted to have the barn and house facing each other." Mattie turned and looked at the house. White, low with two front doors, a porch across the front and rows and rows of flower boxes around the hard sand, swept clean with a brush broom. A picket fence divided the yard and garden.

Mattie turned and smiled at Betsy as the cow started with a run toward the gate.

"Come on, Betsy, I know you want to see your calf, but back your leg now, so I can get started."

Mattie sat down on a low three-cornered stool and leaned her broad forehead against the hard hollow ridge in Betsy's flank, and started milking with both hands as fast as she could. The two streams of milk made hard drives against the bottom of the tin pail, but soon the milk began to splatter against the sides as the pail foamed full.

"Saw, Betsy, I can't let your calf have more than two tits at a time."

The hide of the old cow quivered under the bite of the horseflies. Impatiently Betsy swung her tail around to slap at the flies, and stung Mattie across the face. Eyes smarting, she lifted her damp head from Betsy's hot sweaty side for a breath of air. The sun was setting beneath Ford's hill directly facing her.

"Wonder if I'll miss the sunset . . . no, there'll be city lights. Back to the city . . . for good . . . . tomorrow. . . . The city and Harold." She got up and left the calf to suck, then walked over to lean against the log fence.

"Harold says we'll marry in another month. Marry Harold and I'll live in the city—forever and ever. . . . Not just to go to school and stay with Sister, but live—"

"Mattie, did you get much milk tonight?" Pa Beckett was leaning against the fence looking at the same sunset. Mattie had not heard him come up.

"I haven't stripped Betsy yet, Pa, but the bucket's nearly full."

Mattie picked up the bucket and handed the calf-rope to Pa Beckett. The last streams of milk seemed to hit a padded mass of suds. Pa Beckett pulled the calf over to the fence and tied him.

"Pa, you feel all right? You look tired."

"I'm all right, Mat. But I am tired. I didn't get my afternoon nap with Will here."

"You both always have so much to talk about. Did Uncle Will say when he'd come back?"

Mattie called Will Raybon, "Uncle Will" because she had been taught from childhood to say that. He was her father's best friend and came to visit them as often as he could get away from his business in the city.

"Pa, I almost wish Uncle Will wouldn't come here. It makes you feel worse every time he comes. Now, don't," she said as he turned to her. "I know you do. Especially since Uncle Will made that extra money and the bank closed with your money for the new house in it."

"Hush, Mat. Don't—"

"I'm sorry, Pa. I'll hush. I promised you four years ago I'd never let on I knew anything. You know, Pa, it was in this same place I asked you why Uncle Will never married? It was the afternoon Uncle Will left and I found Ma down back of the hen house crying. I—"

"Guess I'd better go back up to the store for the night, Mat. I'll fetch Betsy some hay. Get your mind off'n that—you'd better go on and help your ma fix supper."

Back in the house, Mattie busied herself setting the table, skimming the milk to fix up the churn, and heating coffee and bread. But she didn't seem to get things done fast enough to suit Ma Beckett.

"Mattie, that milk has been setting ten minutes now and you ain't strained it yet. The cream'll rise and you'll strain every bit of it off. Get a move on'ye."

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"Yes, Ma." Mattie saw no reason for argument. She knew Ma was in one of her moods. Mattie strained the milk into the cooler and carried it outside to let it down into the well for the night.

"Mattie, while you're out there, call your Pa. If he don't come on we'll have to light the lamp to eat by."

Mattie called her father and while he washed in the hall basin, she took the warmed-over bread from the stove oven and carried it to the table. The main dish was a platter with chicken heads, wings, and feet covered in cold gravy.

Ma Beckett had put the chicken on early in the morning to smother it. She always cooked chicken this way for "Uncle Will." This was his favorite dish. Fried onions, creamed potatoes, and hot, steamed pudding were always on the table on the days of Uncle Will's visits.

"He can't get what he wants to eat in a city cafe," was Ma Beckett's explanation for her extraordinary care in the preparation for the food.

"Ma looks so different tonight from what she did this morning. She has changed from her best Sunday dress to an old faded gingham, and her face looks different, somehow. She looks worried tonight, and one time this morning Ma looked almost young."

Mattie glanced up from her plate to find Grandma staring directly at her. It was the third time during supper that this had happened.

"Grandma looks at me so funny tonight. I wish I had time to talk to her again before I leave but—I wish she would go on to bed at night and not come to the supper table."

Grandma had not eaten anything for supper as far back as Mattie could remember, but she always came and sat with them so that she could help wash the dishes later.

Grandma has worked so hard all her life, and been sad all her life—'cept for the seven years after she ran away and married Grandpa instead of her rich cousin. They were happy even if kids did come every year. Then the mule ran away with Grandpa. Nobody to help her, but she lived somehow. Work has made her stooped—kids to raise—Ma's the baby. . . .

"Mattie, if Claude Drinkard is coming over here tonight you'd better quit mooning and git on another dress."

"Well, Ma, I thought I'd help—"

"No, I'll do the dishes myself tonight. Go on and git ready—"

As Mattie started to get up from the table, Pa Beckett leaned over and patted her hand.

"Pa, you'd better get to bed tonight and not go over to Perry's to play checkers. You're too tired."

"Believe I will, Mattie. I reckon Perry'll understand."

Pa Beckett took his old brown hat off the nail just above his chair, stopped a moment to rub his back against the door facing and walked out into the late afternoon twilight.

Mattie picked up one of the oil lamps on the kitchen table, lighted it and then went into her room to dress. The dress Mattie had saved out to wear was a soft shade of blue voile. Ma Beckett had made it for her the week before. Claude had never seen the dress, but there was no doubt in Mattie's mind but that he would like it. But Harold wouldn't. He liked her in tailored suits and plain, "stylish" dresses. This dress was the kind of dress Mattie had always liked, soft and dainty. Ma Beckett had dropped the payment on Grandma's burial policy so that Mattie could dress pretty for Harold. Still Mattie knew she didn't have enough clothes. What she had Harold wouldn't like. She didn't have the heart to tell Ma Beckett about that, because Ma was so glad she had chosen to marry Harold. Grandma thought she was making a mistake.

"You're carried away with him, Mat, but that's not enough. You're different from him. You jest got a simple, pure heart, Mat, and you're dazzled by the money and the city—not that I don't think Harold is a fine young man, but—Lor'! I remember that cousin I was s'posed to marry—money—high entertaining—dinner parties, op'ry—but me and your grandpa got a thrill out of going to a square dance or a box supper. I never had been to one 'fore I married him. I loved 'em. . . . Your Ma tried that kind of life when she visited Will's sister, but she couldn't keep up. That's why she married your Pa. I know she thinks she's made a mistake, but she ain't."

Mattie knotted her brown hair in a small bundle on the back of her neck, then looked hard at her plain oval face in the mirror.

She walked out to the front porch and found Claude waiting for her. He took a step forward, then stopped looking at Mattie as she was silhouetted there in the doorway.

"Do you want to come in, Claude, or walk out to the grape arbor?"

"Let's walk, Mat," and he took her hand. Claude's hand felt damp and hard. Mattie tried not to think of Harold, but a slight tremor ran through her body. She threw back her head and tried to shake off something that seemed to be in the night air. Then she clung more resolutely to Claude's hand.

The stars had come out and there in the late twilight the only noise was the shrill chirp of crickets.

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"It'll be fair tomorrow, Mat. I haven't heard a single frog tonight—pretty day for yer trip. . . ." Claude's words seemed to echo in the thick silence that had settled around the grape arbor.

"Mat," Claude's voice sounded strangely familiar yet far away. "Mat—I don't know what to say—I know—I—I oughten to tell you this. I don't—I mean if you ever come home—I'll be here—don't forget. . . ."

"Yes—yes . . . you'll be here, Claude. I'll—remember—I'll . . ."

"Mat, don't—". She turned to him silently. The hard swift press of his lips—then an emotion flooded her whole body—overcame her with a sudden warm tide of feeling. . . .

"Claude—"

"Yes, Mat."

"You'd—better go now."

"Good-night, Mat—"

The click of the front gate. . . . Mattie went to her room and closed the door. She took down her hair and started brushing it. Her glance fell on her bag—packed and ready for the trip. A sharp pain seemed to pierce her heart. Harold. . . . I ought to love him. Yet—I can't. With Harold—society, dinners, "high entertainments in the city," grandma said. Silver round your plate—which fork; my large hands—Harold's mother—his sister—that house. Harold scolded me once for smiling at the maid. Servants, clothes, evening dresses. I never have worn an evening dress!"

Mattie stood at the window and let the cool breeze blow against her hot face.

"What can I do? Run away—never come back. But Ma—She wants me to marry Harold."

Tears came into Mattie's eyes. She lay across the bed and tried to cry, but she couldn't. She took an old brown coat from her closet, threw it around her shoulders, slipped out into the night. . . .

Three o'clock came and Mattie crept in, flung herself across the bed and went to sleep.

. . . . . .

The cock's crow cut the early morning silence. Mattie sat up in bed, then jumped out and started dressing. The sound of breakfast preparation hurried her and she dashed out the back door with the milk bucket.

"Come on, Fritz. Milk-time." Mattie stopped to pat the dog's head. Then she flung aside the pail and grasped Fritz tightly around the neck. "And you won't miss me, Fritz—ol' boy, cause I'm not-a-goin'."

—*Helen Morgan,* '38

MOONRISE

The moon's jest over the hill-top,
And thar's an' ol' hoot owl
A' sottin' in the pine tree
Hootin' at it.
And thar's a cotton-tail
Skootchin' by that bresh-pile
With one ear up and one down
Lookin' quizzical.
The moon's jest over the hill-top.

—*Ellen Fish,* '38